

Contact phenomena: The I-Language of a bilingual

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The common-sense view holds that a bilingual is in possession of two separate systems with discrete boundaries. I argue that any I-language – including the I-language of people that we call bi or multi-lingual – is a single cognitive system of a human mind which grows, like any other I-language, in interaction with the heterogenous input provided by the environment. Consequently, the lexicon, grammar and PF of a human bi-lingual are fully integrated. I present some empirical evidence drawn from code-switching and so-called transfer or interference. I sketch analyses based on Distributed Morphology assumptions. Finally, I discuss the consequences of this approach to our understanding of other contact phenomena like borrowing and loan translation.